

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Jim Bradley on 6/18/04.

The application has been amended as follows: The claims have been amended as in the attachment of pages 5-12 and the specification has been amended as on page 13.

Reasons for Allowance

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: regarding claims 4-12, 19, 22, 23, 25, and 26, the prior art of record does not teach or fairly suggest leveling the z-pins while the peel plies are present so as to form a stubble of z-pins of the same height. While cutting the z-pins flush is known as shown by Childress(U.S Patent 5,935,680), this occurs at the end of the formation of the joint and is not intended to level the pins to form a stubble of z-pins of the same height. Regarding claim 18, while de-bulking is known in general in the resin impregnating arts, there is no suggestion in the art to de-bulk the composite after application of the peel plies and before insertion of the z-pins. Regarding claim 20, while it is known in the art to use non-porous films as release layers, the prior art of record does not teach or fairly suggest placing a non-porous film between two peel plies, particularly since the z-pins

6/28/04